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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the use of enrollment limitations by "flagship" state universities in regard to out-of-state (OOS) students, presenting a case study of the enrollment limitation debate in the University of North Carolina system and its Chapel Hill (UNC-CH) campus over the last decade. The state legislature, in concert with the board of governors, decided in 1985-86 to limit enrollment of OOS freshmen to 18 percent starting in 1988. Critics of the cap argue that it has created two distinct student bodies: a small, elite group of mainly OOS students and a larger, less selective in-state group. An analysis of legislative documents, university reports, media stories, and interviews with administrators, faculty, and students found that attempts to allow distinctive OOS admission policies for UNC-CH were effectively thwarted by political concerns. The study also found that research-based information did not play a major role in decision-making about the issue, and that tuition levels have been a fundamental aspect of the rationale of supporters of enrollment limits. An appendix contains a copy of the interview protocol. (Contains 61 references.) (MDM)

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Painful Choices:
Emerging Tensions between Universities and Their Publics*

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Painful Choices:
Emerging Tensions between Universities and Their Publics

Abstract

Neither research-based information nor the distinctive missions of the state's various public postsecondary institutions has played a significant role in recent policy making concerning limiting out-of-state enrollment in North Carolina. The research and policy implications of this and related findings from this case-study analysis are considered.

Painful Choices:
Emerging Tensions between Universities and Their Publics

The 1990s unquestionably bring a growing array of painful policy choices to higher education. A variety of academic and private-sector leaders (e.g., see Cole, 1993; Bok, 1990, 1992) have noted developing tensions between the rising demands for greater public accountability and the longer-term implications of acceding to those demands. For example, to fund access for undergraduates, some states are pressuring their public universities to forego graduate education and research, thereby calling into question activities central to traditional values concerning faculty autonomy and access to higher learning (Breneman, 1993). In 1994, University of California system provost Walter Massey noted that, although every state recognizes the advantages of having a "world-class" research university within its borders, many public universities are endangering their previously unquestioned popular support by failing to be accountable stewards of public funds. Data reflecting the public's confidence in society's major institutions suggests that although both the general public and community leaders express some element of support for higher education, this support is more fragile than educators would wish (Harvey and Immerwahr, 1995). Even though the more people held science and education leaders in high regard in 1991 than in the early 1980s, the volume of public criticism and skepticism about selected university practices has increased (Prewitt, 1993). And while eight in ten Californians who participated in a recent poll feel that high school graduates should go to college to improve their job prospects, the majority of the respondents believe that society has made college more important than it is. They do not consider the substance behind the degree to be a requirement for success in the workplace (Wadsworth, 1995).

In a similar vein, economist and former college president David Breneman has noted in a recent editorial essay (1995, p. B2) that,

> After four decades of largely unbroken growth in resources and enrollment, higher education is several years into a new era, which severely challenges those whose careers have been built on the assumption of unending prosperity. Industry, health care, the military, state government, and now the federal government have experienced comparable pressure and are adapting to the new realities. Higher education can hardly expect to be immune from such pressure, and yet its culture is particularly resistant to change. Institutions that perform responsibly during these trying times may regain both public trust and public funds as a result. The challenge to leadership has never been greater.

Breneman closes by suggesting that states should "think the unthinkable.... [S]ome sweeping changes must be considered, because the combination of growing demand and limited state resources will not permit painless solutions" (p. B2). With this in mind, Breneman is among

those authorities who have suggested that limits on out-of-state enrollment, or at least the imposition of substanitally higher prices for out-of-state students' attendance, can make sense for states facing fiscal pressure. Specifically, Breneman (1995) suggests leaders in states facing a growing student population (including Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Washington) should consider whether to "exclude out-of-state undergraduates from a state's public colleges and universities" (p. B1).

This issue is becoming an increasingly familiar one, especially in states with prestigious "flagship" public institutions. The main argument of those favoring such limitations has generally been that a state's public universities should strongly emphasize serving the needs of state citizens, rather than the needs of those from other states. Without strictly limiting the number of out-of-state students, many state policy-makers argue, highly qualified out-of-state students would increasingly take up spaces, and thus deny spaces for taxpaying state residents and their children. From the perspective of many public policy makers, the logic is clear and convincing: quality higher education is a valuable state resource that must be protected for the citizenry largely responsible for its funding, especially in today's environment of fiscal constraint. Yet, dissenters argue that imposing such limitations inevitably results in a more provincial, less diverse, and less competitive undergraduate population, and may render education in public institutions less desirable both for state citizens and for others. Those arguing against stricter limitations have argued that such changes will seriously erode public universities' quality, reputation, and perhaps even relevance, especially in the globally competitive environment for which students must prepare. What is more, shrinking the pool of talented out-of-state students may well shrink, in turn, the number of those from outside the state staying in the state after college graduation, thus possibly damaging a state's economic, social, and cultural prospects. Therefore, although enrollment limitations would appear to be protecting a cherished asset for use primarily by a state's citizens, the enrollment limitations may, in the longer term, endanger the very asset such actions are designed to protect.

Obviously, the out-of-state [OOS] student issue is controversial and portentous. In this paper, we present an investigation of one prominent case of enrollment limitation. We focus upon the University of North Carolina [UNC] system, and in particular its "flagship" research-university campus at Chapel Hill [UNC-CH]. Although several states on Breneman's list are considering instituting or tightening out-of-state enrollment quotas,[1] the North Carolina case may

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[1] For example, Virginia has been actively debating the issue (Washington Post, 1993), and Georgia recently moved to raise substantially tuition for out-of-state students (Walker, 1995). Georgia ranked lowest in the nation in in-state tuition rises over the years 1990-1995 (only 23 percent), and currently ranks 38th in out-of-state tuition. The changes in out-of-state tuition rates apparently represent an attempt by policy makers to limit the extent to which Georgia's low tuition rates would be extended to those from outside the state.

merit special attention. UNC-CH is widely regarded as a leading public university (Jaschik, 1989), and the UNC system is likewise widely respected as a premier public system, ranking second in a recent poll of college presidents, state governors, and other educational leaders.[2] UNC-CH is increasingly popular among prospective students nationally, and the pool of talented applicants is both wide and deep. The UNC system began formally restricting the enrollment of out-of-state students in 1985-86. Currently, no more than 18 percent of the admitted freshmen classes in UNC institutions may come from outside the state. The case study we present was designed as an intensive investigation of the nature of the decision-making process surrounding this issue. Given UNC-CH's national reputation as a "public ivy," policy experiences there could be generalizable and influential elsewhere.

Conceptualization

The public research university is a clear example of a multipurpose professional organization (Hall, 1982). Because such organizations tend to allow flexibility in tasks undertaken by their personnel and challenges to status quo interpretations of goals, several authors have suggested that they may be more effective than organizations with clearcut goal consensus (e.g., see Etzioni, 1964). Nevertheless, the various goals can make incompatible demands on staff; external constituencies often differ in the goals they encourage the organization to pursue; and conflicts can arise over the proper allocation of means, time, and energy (Ibid, 1964). These strengths and weaknesses of multipurpose organizations are clearly present in the public research university (Birnbaum, 1988; Tuckman and Chang, 1988). Although having multiple goals allows these institutions to take advantage of a variety of alternative opportunities, it also presents them with a variety of difficult countervailing pressures (Finifter, Baldwin, and Thelin, 1991).

In public universities, as in all public organizations, much of the difficulties involving goals takes place in response to emerging agendas of external authorities.[3] Currently, the factor highest on the public agenda in most states seems to be accountability, and most specifically, the use of taxpayer dollars. Higher-education spending has taken the worst hit of all state spending categories in recent years (Gold, 1995), and the public and the legislators who represent it seem

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[2] Respondents to a national survey of 250 college presidents, state governors, and other educational leaders perceived that North Carolina was operating the nation's second ranked public higher-education system, following California and ahead of Michigan, New York, Minnesota, and several others frequently mentioned as excellent (Gilley, 1991). The specific question was "Which states do you admire most for the overall quality of public colleges and universities?" The survey was conducted by the Center for Policy Studies in Education, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA, was entitled the 1988-89 Survey of Higher Education., and is described in detail in Gilley (1991). For a journalistic perspective on the system's strong reputation, and the difficulties of maintaining that reputation, see two articles by Jaschik (1987, 1989).

[3] See Simsek and Louis, 1994. For a more general discussion of this tendency, see Kingdon (1984).

to want further assurance that postsecondary educators are spending their tax-based resources in the best interests of their states.

Most often, the debate surrounding this issue has taken the character of what Wildavsky (1979) has called the "social interaction" style of decision making, rather than what he terms the "intellectual cognition" style. That is, systematic, information -based models of policy analysis and policy making have played a secondary role to political bargaining, mediation, and compromise. Although the "intellectual cognition" approach is most often recommended in the strategic planning and decision-making literature, many analysts have noted that it is rare for the "intellectual cognition" approach to dominate in state-level policy making. Wildavsky (1979) noted that the social nature of political rationality is no less important than the cognitively driven styles of decision making academics tend to term "rational." In fact, pursuing the usual "rational" criteria for decision making about policy can sometimes exert negative influence on, for example, aspects of diversity and equity that campus leaders want to support (Slaughter, 1995)

These complexities and related tensions are apparent in Trombley's 1993 case-study analysis of California higher education policy. Trombley suggests that public policy in higher education in California has been developed more out of publicly repeated anecdotes and immediate budgetary concerns than out of fundamental considerations concerning the state's goals in higher education. Trombley argues that a significant community-college fee increase was adopted as part of a "last-minute budget agreement" between California Governor Pete Wilson and state Democratic leaders, without attention to relevant research evidence, without philosophical discussion, and without meaningful input from education leaders. According to Trombley (p. 2), the fee, which was for those attending community college classes though already holding the baccalaureate degree, was adopted because political leaders felt that college graduates taking classes were mainly "'rich housewives' who wanted to study French so they could converse with waiters on their next European vacations." Evidence contradicting that view and the philosophical basis of the fee increase were apparently never considered by lawmakers. Entering this study, we were curious as to whether such a pattern would hold in decisions regarding out-of-state students in North Carolina.

Background for the University of North Carolina Case Study

To understand our research design, some prefatory material is necessary. The following sections outline the governance of public four-year higher education in North Carolina and the chronology of the out-of-state enrollment issue there.

Governance of the University of North Carolina System and its Institutions: In 1971 and 1972, North Carolina instituted a "superboard" system of governance for postsecondary education. That is, from that point forward, its public four-year institutions were to be governed

by one board with budgetary, program review, and policy authority. This governing arrangement, among the most centralized in place in the U.S., is similar to that of Wisconsin, Iowa, Georgia, Massachusetts, and Arizona.[4] In North Carolina, however, the sixteen individual campuses maintain their own boards, which have limited but real authority over certain campus policy issues.

Thus, the groundwork is in place for some tension over the domains of institutional and system authority. Graham (1989, p. 103) has noted that "flagship campuses have widely deplored the tendency of superboards to level down existing peaks of excellence;" one board chairman complained that, with superboards, "Pretty soon, everybody is four feet tall." In North Carolina, the potential is certainly there for central powers to come into conflict with individual institutions. Legally, the University of North Carolina is a single public system made up of sixteen public baccalaureate-granting institutions. The state's General Assembly elects 32 voting members for UNC's Board of Governors, who serve four-year terms, with a maximum of three full terms possible.[5] The Board of Governors elects a president, who proposes a budget for the system. After approval by the Board of Governors, the president presents the budget request to the General Assembly and its committees. The president communicates with the individual institutions through their respective heads, who are called chancellors.

At the campus level, each institution has a thirteen-member Board of Trustees. Eight of these are elected by the system's Board of Governors, four are appointed by the Governor, and one is the president of the institution's student government association. Terms are for four years, and members can be elected to two consecutive terms. Chancellors of institutions owe their appointments to the system's president, who nominates a prospective chancellor for confirmation by the Board of Governors. Each nominee put forward by the president, however, is drawn from a list of at least two names nominated by the Board of Trustees of the institution. An institution's chancellor carries out the policies of the system Board of Governors and campus Board of Trustees; through the system president, keeps the Board of Governors informed of the needs of the individual institution; serves as an advisor to the president; and participates in the budget process for the system. The chancellor is to ensure that there is a faculty council or senate on his or her campus, and may attend and preside over all meetings.

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[4] Graham (1989), Hearn and Griswold (1994) and Hearn, Griswold, and Marine (in press) review the emergence of this form of governance and investigate some of its policy implications. See McGuinness (1988) for a summary of state governance arrangements around the nation. Graham (1989) concludes with an impassioned argument against superboard form of governance, especially when it encompasses research universities such as UNC-CH.

[5] Among the sixteen voting board members elected every two years, the legislators must always elect at least 2 women, 2 members from racial minorities, and 2 members of the largest minority party in the General Assembly. The Board also has non-voting members, including the president of the state student-government association, former state governors, and former Board members (for one term after serving).

The UNC system provides dollars to its institutions according to a formula based on enrollment and other factors. Tuition and fees for UNC institutions and programs are set at the system level by the Board of Governors, consistent with the actions of the General Assembly. The state constitution mandates that tuition be kept low to maintain access for citizens. There is little latitude for institutional influence on these decisions, and the funds from increased revenue from tuition and fees on individual campuses do not "belong" to that campus. Instead, they go into the state system's general funds account.[6]

Each individual institution establishes admissions policies for programs on its campus. Nevertheless, the Board of Governors has the power to establish enrollment guidelines for each institution, and the outcomes of campus-level admission policies are matters of legitimated concern for the Board of Governors and the legislature. The experience of the recent years suggests that, if the student-body composition resulting from a campus's admissions policies is viewed unfavorably by those outside parties, sanctions can follow. Those sanctions can, in turn, indirectly shape institutional admissions policies, regardless of the existence of formal campus-level authority over admissions.

The Out-of-State Enrollment Issue – Actors and the Chronology of Events: The actors in this drama fall into three clusters: the UNC-CH trustees, chancellor, faculty, students, and administration; the UNC system Board of Governors, president, and staff; and the state legislature and its staff. The events are best understood chronologically. Although not an exhaustive history, the following highlights the involvement of the actors and the pressures compelling their involvement.[7]

Before unification of the UNC system in 1971, each campus determined its own admission criteria with the understanding that each institution was to serve the state and tuition was to be kept low. After 1971, the system leadership advised UNC-CH to keep out-of-state undergraduate population at about fifteen percent, with exceptions for athletes, children of alumni, and applicants with special talent. At the same time, the UNC system froze the size of the student body. Through the 1970s, however, the limit on out-of-state students was largely ignored. Especially in the early years of the decade, college students were less mobile, and those who attended public institutions tended to stay in their home state. When mobility increased in

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[6] Specifically, any excess of a campus's actual tuition revenues over those previously forecast at the system level resides in that campus's accounts for the year in question, but is deducted from the following year's state funding for the campus. Thus, the net return to the campus for exceeding enrollment projections is virtually zero.

[7] The organizational and historical record presented here was constructed from a variety of sources, including especially Clarke (1986); Third Century Project (1986, 1987); North Carolina Memorandum (1986a, b); Admissions Task Force (1987); Cloninger (1988); Fisher (1988); Graham (1989); Jaschik (1989); General Alumni Association (1989); Students for Educational Access (1990); Pitts (1990); Economic Future Study Commission (1991); Wallsten (1992); Daily Tar Heel (1992); Student Government Executive Branch (1994); a UNC-CH internal self-study report (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1995); Hardin (1994); and Cambanis (1995).

the late 1970s and early 1980s, funding was plentiful and there was little concern over the tuition subsidy for out-of-state students. In 1980, approximately 15 percent of the new freshmen at UNC-CH were from out of state.

By the mid-1980s, the proportion of out-of-state students in the system and at UNC-CH had grown and financial concerns had gained importance. In particular, taxpayers were becoming more aware of the cost of subsidizing out-of-state students. The legislature, in concert with the system Board of Governors, decided in 1985-86 to limit enrollment of out-of-state freshmen in each institution to 18 percent starting in 1988.[8] Several institutions in the system opposed this limitation, but for different reasons. The different grounds on which the institutions based their opposition provide a view of the equity issues that inevitably exist in a system that includes national research institutions, regional universities, and state colleges. For example, some schools located close to bordering states complained that limiting the geographic area from which they could draw would jeopardize their ability to fill the freshman class; some historically Black institutions complained that their enrollment depended on attracting significant numbers of out-of-state students to specific programs they offer; UNC-CH officials feared that such a limit could compromise the university's national stature and result in an insulated, more provincial institution (see Clarke, 1986; Effron, 1986). In an effort to protect spaces for which academically talented out-of-state students could compete, UNC-CH trustees proposed that out-of-state athletes and children of alumni not be counted in the limit. The Board of Governors rejected this proposal.

In 1988 UNC-CH began a search for a new chancellor. As part of the process, the search committee charged a team of outside reviewers with the task of examining the condition of the university. The reviewers noted that the 18 percent limit had "fueled faculty fears" that two student bodies were developing: a small, elite group of mainly out-of-state students and a larger, less selective in-state group. Although a significant number of the in-state students were high performers in their secondary schools, better prepared students from stronger out-of-state schools outdistanced them in the classroom and in other university activities (Fisher, 1988, p. 22). Reviewers found that, in general, faculty supported raising the limit, and noted that the SAT average of out-of-state freshmen was 1325, compared to 1125 for in-state freshmen (ibid., p. 25).

In 1989 a new chancellor arrived, and faculty and alumni used the occasion to observe that intrusive state regulation, lack of respect from system administration, and inadequate finances were endangering the university's quality and ability to compete nationally. In his inaugural remarks, the new chancellor called for less regulation by the system, but predicted that change would come slowly. The next year UNC-CH student leaders joined the conversation by calling

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[8] An unofficial limit of 15 percent was in place before that time, but that limit had many exceptions and was never enforced.

for increased out-of-state enrollment as a means to enhance quality and diversity. The students declined to name a desirable ratio of in-state to out-of-state freshmen, but noted that competitiveness should be preserved. Students suggested that in years when the number of in-state applicants declines, the university should admit more well-qualified out-of-state students in lieu of less-qualified in-staters. Although university administrators agreed with the students, stating that even an increase from 18 to 20 percent would help, no action was taken by the system leadership.

In 1991 a state-wide commission to study the economic future of North Carolina observed that the state's public universities contributed to its economic, cultural, and political enrichment. The commission noted especially the international reputation of the research institutions. State law mandates low tuition to make higher education highly accessible to all citizens, but from 1970 to 1990 the percentage of the cost of education born by in-state students had decreased from 13 to 8 percent. The commission questioned the wisdom of maintaining this low tuition rate, and recommended that campuses be allowed to increase tuition and use the resulting revenue to fund financial aid and enhance academic programs (Economic Future Study Commission, 1991, p. 39-41). Their recommendation was not adopted by system leadership.

In the same period, however, the North Carolina House of Representatives responded to financial pressures by increasing out-of-state tuition by 25 percent in 1991 and by 15 percent in 1992. System officials criticized the move, stating that the raise could threaten UNC-CH's competitiveness and noting that 40 percent of UNC-CH's out-of-state students stay in the state and contribute to its economic strength. Legislators disagreed on the grounds that taxpayers should not so heavily subsidize education for out-of-staters (Wallsten, 1992). One legislator noted "They say we need out-of-state students to bring more culture to the system. I'd say a real naughty word for that one, starting with bull."[9]

In 1994, to help mark the university's bicentennial, the UNC-CH student government put forward a report (Student Government Executive Branch, 1994) that included a call for revised admission quotas. Attributing the university's reputation for selectivity to "intense competition for out-of-state admission slots" (p. 41), student-government officials noted that the state gains when out-of-state students improve overall student quality, diversity, and competitiveness. The report noted that UNC-CH's openness to out-of-staters was a "brain magnet" for the state. Citing data suggesting that children of out-of-state alumni receive preference over other out-of-state applicants, the report recommended excluding children of out-of-state alumni from the quota, thereby returning more slots to the competitive pool.

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[9] Daily Tar Heel, 1992.

A year later, a ten-year re-accreditation self-study on the Chapel Hill campus contained the suggestion that the university give greater weight to selection criteria that focus on intellectual ability and intensify its efforts to keep the brightest North Carolina students at UNC-CH (University of North Carolina, 1995). In the self-study report, a task force on undergraduate programs urged university officials to work with system and state personnel to reach a more complete understanding of the issues concerning out-of-state admissions and, when possible, win a reasonable increase in the allowed percentage. Report authors noted that increasing the out-of-state cohort would improve the intellectual quality of the entire student body, contribute to a more favorable intellectual climate, and thus benefit all students (University of North Carolina, 1995, p. 92).

Also in 1995, UNC-CH campus chancellor Paul Hardin retired. In a final campus address, he remarked that although local and regional political pressures are understandable, misguided ambitions can threaten vital diversity and push American higher education toward "sterile homogeneity" (Hardin, 1994, p. 1). He called on statewide governing boards to temper local ambition and political pressure with planning and coherence, and protect the different missions of the institutions within their charge. He urged universities to support their faculties and make them full partners in institutional concerns. Clearly implicit in his message was a call for openness to students from beyond North Carolina's borders.

Most recently, however, the system's Board of Governors initiated new moves meant to assure that budgets will be cut at public institutions in the state if they enroll too many students from out of state (Chronicle of Higher Education, 1995). Apparently, the Board and legislators had come to believe that there were too many ways for institutions to avoid penalties for exceeding the 18-percent limit.

Research Design

In the tradition of rigorous case-study methodology, the research was based on a) intensive analysis of documents from the legislature, reports in the media, and various internal communications and reports of the university and the UNC system[10] and b) a series of interviews (fifteen in all) with legislative staff leaders, board members of the UNC system and the UNC-CH campus, high-ranking administrators of the UNC system and the UNC-CH campus, UNC-CH student-government leaders, and UNC-CH faculty members. New informants were added opportunistically as the study proceeded, with the goal of interviewing as many critical actors in the debate as feasible. Interviews followed the protocol and series of questions outlined in the Appendix. Despite the formal structure of the protocol and questions, however, each respondent

[10] The primary documentary sources were those listed in footnote 7.

was encouraged to elaborate upon any question at whatever length desired. Although each question was asked of each respondent, the interviewer allowed the remaining time in interviews to flow naturally around themes raised by respondents. This "semi-structured" interviewing approach and a triangulating approach to data-gathering assured necessary rigor and flexibility in the design.

Our analysis was aimed at addressing three fundamental research questions, each manifesting a tension that seems to be at play. The questions are: who has been making the central decisions concerning the out-of-state enrollment issue, how have those decisions been made (e.g., how have constituencies framed the issue, advanced their interests, and defended their points), and how have the limits been implemented and institutionalized over time?

The first question, addresses not merely the official positions of the decision makers, but the underlying hierarchy of authority their behavior reveals. What pressures do the objectives of each group of actors depend upon or reveal? Do these pressures suggest that actors are working to retain an established structure, even in the face of changing environmental requirements; or that actors are seeking diversity of form and function to best meet environmental demands and enhance competitive advantage? If objectives are shared, then one might find evidence that the actors have examined the pressures that influence them. If objectives diverge, then the evidence might suggest that actors have left pressures unexplored.

The second question concerns the style of decision making and brings to mind the tensions that Wildavsky's (1979) identifies. Were the political bargaining and compromise that Wildavsky associates with social interaction at play; or did the more systematic, fact-based analysis that characterizes intellectual cognition drive decision making? What role has information and analysis played?

The third question concerns policy about the literal limit and the extent to which it became routine campus practice. Whose values took precedence as the limit was adopted: the perhaps more educational and longer-term values related to student body composition that the campus-based groups claimed, or the perhaps more political and immediate values related to serving state citizens that the legislature and the system espoused? Whose values took precedence as policy was implemented? Did campus practitioners make exceptions, thereby increasing the geographic diversity they value, or did they support the literal limit?

Findings

Seven distinct findings emerged from the analysis. Our first finding was that *the enrollment limit was imposed from the legislature and system officials, with little formal or informal discussion among UNC-CH constituencies or between those constituencies and higher-level policy makers.* Entering the study, we were curious as to who made the central initial decisions regarding this issue: the legislature, the system, campus-based administrators, faculty, students, or some combination of these groups? Our first finding's blunt simplicity therefore surprised us somewhat, in light of the preceding review of events. On the surface, the chronology would seem to suggest that the limit has been a topic of hot debate and therefore a prominent issue in conversations within the university, the system, and the state and among those three entities. For the most part, however, a non-campus based entity (the UNC system, at the official behest of the legislature) imposed the limit, and campus officials, faculty, and students had virtually no role then or since in formal decision making concerning it. One campus administrator noted that although each institution formally has the power to set its own admission standards, the campuses "were not invited to comment on the implications of the 18 percent [limit]....The debate has been private." That administrator went on to complain that "We are not respecting different missions... and we ought to debate it."

But the absence of formal attention to the issue goes beyond the nature of the decision process imposed from the top. UNC-CH faculty and student governance leaders have not themselves regularly addressed the issue at any length in their own internal bodies. Although OOS limits were raised in faculty council sessions on a regular basis by certain faculty members, particularly faculty from the Arts and Sciences area, in which all undergraduates are enrolled, sentiments to at least tolerate the limits were evident in the professional and graduate schools, and no decisions emerged from council sessions. Perhaps as a consequence, most campus constituencies seem to have little awareness of or information about the possible implications of OOS enrollment limitation for future directions of the university. Our UNC-CH respondents attribute the absence of formal debate and action to a variety of causes, including lack of faculty interest in the undergraduate population, perceived inability of campus constituencies to influence the decision, and a general lack of awareness that intellectual quality and the number of out-of-state undergraduates might be linked.[11] Not surprisingly, therefore, even the source of the policy is a point of confusion on the UNC-CH campus. In sometimes vague ways, campus representatives attribute the limit to various non-campus based sources such as the legislature, the Board of Governors, the system administration, or the system president.

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[11] For example, one faculty member observed that faculty would get interested only if the quota were extended to the graduate student population, and she saw little possibility of this happening. In a separate interview, however, a legislative actor remarked that such discussions were underway at the state level; a quota on out-of-state graduate students could become a reality.

Our second finding was that *attempts to allow distinctive OOS admission policies for UNC-CH were effectively thwarted by political concerns.* Although Chapel Hill faculty and administration leaders sought to liberalize the enrollment limits for their campus by stressing the special nature of UNC-CH, these efforts failed on political grounds in two ways. First, questions of inter-institutional equity in the UNC system arose when other institutions also stressed special needs for liberalized admissions. Predominantly African-American institutions emphasized their distinctive regional and national roles, while institutions near state borders noted that they would always be especially attractive to close-by students in neighboring states. Second, further concerns regarding liberalizing UNC-CH admissions for OOS students arose from its special place as the state's oldest, largest, and most visible institution. Many North Carolina high-school seniors hold UNC-CH as their first choice for college attendance, and legislators appear to hear more complaints about rejected applications to the Chapel Hill campus than any other. Quite often, such complaints were coming from well-to-do citizens who are parents of aspiring college students. Policy makers were loathe to ignore those complaints while addressing complaints about rejections to other institutions.[12] In the end, faced with a variety of special pleas and appeals from constituents with political leverage, legislators and system leaders opted for an 18-percent policy standardized across all senior-level public institutions in the state.

Our third finding, like the first two, centers around the politics of the issue: *no campus constituency has been uniform in their views, and none has mobilized significantly to support one or another view on the issue.* In general, it appears faculty and administrators have tended to oppose the 18-percent limit. Individual faculty and campus administrators listed for us or for campus publications the following arguments for increasing the limit: admission is currently denied to many bright and diverse students who could "get in anywhere" and would enrich the UNC-CH experience of other students; the state would benefit from the increase in tuition revenue that more out-of-state students would generate (even though the university would not benefit because all tuition funds go into a general system fund); faculty want to teach more capable and well-prepared students and these tend to belong to the out-of-state cohort; many alumni and other donors live out of state and it is in the interest of the university to admit their qualified children; and talented out-of-state students tend to stay in the state and become valuable contributors to a strong economy. Two faculty members noted that their honors sections were more than 50 percent populated by out-of-staters. Another wished that the undergraduate population could have a larger international cohort, because in-state students would benefit from

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[12] When asked by fellow Board of Governor members how to react to requests to help secure admittance to UNC-CH for the underqualified children of friends, one long-time board member responded: "I just tell them to get friends with smarter children."

exposure to international students. Unfortunately, he noted, the limit severely reduces the university's ability to accept international students.

Campus-based respondents also remarked that sentiment to retain the limit is located mainly outside the institution at the system and state levels, stressing that political forces work against admitting more out-of-staters. Several years ago, the Board of Trustees' then chairman Robert Eubanks captured that view: "I think it's low because Chapel Hill is a state university and our first service is to the state of North Carolina. It's awfully hard to turn down North Carolina students and ask the legislature to fund UNC" (Cloninger, 1988 , p. 1). Legislators, our respondents stressed, favor educating state citizens first, because the lawmakers do not understand the necessary scope of a national research institution and do not want to face voters whose children have been denied admission to North Carolina's "public ivy" institution. More than one campus respondent named the University of Virginia, the University of Michigan, or the University of Wisconsin as institutions to emulate with respect to their higher percentages of out-of-state students. Some mentioned that various campus groups have recommended a higher percentage of out-of-state students for UNC-CH.[13]

Yet, it was possible to find support for the limits among both UNC-CH faculty and administrators. Beyond outright support, members of both groups also expressed understanding of the need for the limits from the perspective of state citizenry. That is, although tending to oppose strict, formally imposed admissions limits from a personal or professional standpoint, some respondents noted empathetically that they could understand their genesis and endurance. In this sense, it would be wrong to characterize the faculty and administration as unilaterally opposed to the admission limit.

Like faculty and administrators, student views on the limit have been somewhat mixed. On one hand, UNC-CH students polled systematically by the student-government association in 1993 expressed support for the limit on out-of-state enrollment, although not by wide margins, [14] and the then UNC-CH student-government president Brien Lewis (Pitts, 1990) argued forcefully in 1990 against increasing the number of out-of-state students beyond the 18 limit. On the other hand, other student-government leaders have spoken consistently in opposition to the limit. Most recently, in their 1994 assessment of the university (Student Government Executive Branch,

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[13] It is perhaps related that campus-based respondents tended to refer to North Carolina not as citizens of the state, but as outside observers of state and local events, while legislative and system officials tended to claim their status as participating citizens. For example, one faculty member commented that he had "watched state processes" for 26 years and referred to North Carolinians as "they" throughout the interview. In contrast, a longtime resident who was a member of the Board of Governors described himself as being a part of state processes and used "we" consistently.

[14] Students were given the following survey item: "UNC currently requires that 82% of each incoming freshman class be from North Carolina. Do you think there should be a greater percentage of students admitted from out of state?" Just over half the respondents (57 percent) answered no (Student Government Executive Branch, 1994). Of course, this student support may be an artifact of the limit itself.

1994), the student government leadership called for raising the OOS admission quotas. The students acknowledged that part of the university's reputation for selectivity results from intense competition for out-of-state slots, but used data from peer universities to conclude that admission standards at UNC-CH are "only mediocre in relation to those at the peer institutions" (p. 39).

As a group, we found our faculty, administrator, and student respondents eager to engage in discussions with us on the OOS issue. As noted in our first finding, however, our respondents did not appear to have discussed the issue frequently among themselves or with colleagues. What is more, it appears that those opposed to or supporting the admissions policy have made few efforts to consolidate their views and present a united front. We uncovered no mobilized faculty, administrator, or student interest groups focusing on this question, and found no evidence that any of the constituencies had joined forces with others to influence the policy development or implementation. Instead, several respondents remarked on their inability to bring focus to their concerns and their attempts to influence the future.

Our fourth finding was that *the various stakeholders have exhibited dramatic differences in their language use and framing of the enrollment-limit issue.* These differences may be both a cause and a consequence of the lack of communication between campus constituencies and system leadership, noted in our first finding. Here Gumport's (1993) observations concerning language use and position within the university seem to apply. Gumport suggested that those at the top of an institution (both executive administrators and faculty research stars) tend to use language of alteration when discussing how an institution might move from the present into the future. These actors are more likely to imagine a future that is different from the present, and therefore view the facts that describe today's reality as changing to produce a more favorable future. Those in the middle of an institution (subordinate administrators and faculty possibly targeted for budget cuts) are more likely to use language of accommodation, signaling that they feel less able to control future direction. For the most part, UNC system officials and legislative actors tended to use the language of top leadership, describing the admissions limit more as a means to a desired end than as an end in itself and therefore subject to change. In contrast, campus-based constituencies, and even senior campus leaders, tended to use the language of middle groups when they described themselves as powerless to influence future decisions.

For example, a senior system leader observed, "You say cap... and we have a guideline... We don't put a cap on [an institution], but it is frowned on [if] they go over their guidelines". According to this respondent, the guideline is looked at every year, and the limit is changeable. Conversely, campus constituencies, even those in senior leadership positions, tended to describe the limit as a "quota" or "cap," calling it a policy imposed upon them with little likelihood of change. Although many faculty favor raising the limit as a means of enlarging the cohort of more highly-selected students, they seem to raise this point with little hope of changing the policy. One faculty member remarked, "Typically we would go to a faculty council meeting and

there would be a couple of people who would routinely stand up and sass the chancellor about it, like a throwaway line or a throwaway pie in the face. It would happen all the time....There are few places for Chapel Hill faculty to express their views in the high reaches of the administration here."

Our fifth finding was that *research-based information has not played a major role in decision-making about this question.* From the start, our analysis was focused on the extent to which North Carolina's OOS decisions have been based on systematic conceptualizations and credible research-based information. A systematic argument for strict OOS admissions limitations can be made on the basis of the perspectives of politics, finance, and public-welfare economics. An equally systematic argument against those limitations can be based on the perspectives of academics and educational researchers concerning educational quality and the arguments of economists regarding long-term benefits for the state. A variety of theoretical and policy arguments are therefore potentially relevant to the OOS issue, and research relevant to the topic is available or feasible to undertake. Yet, although students and others have occasionally used data to support positions on the issue, the development and imposition of the enrollment limits for OOS students in North Carolina has taken place for the most part without the use of existing theory or research.

Largely disregarded have been potentially useful data on "stay rates" of out-of-state graduates, research on sensitivity to prices among different groups, and the like. Even though most respondents acknowledged the "public ivy" nature of Chapel Hill's reputation and were aware that enrollment restrictions could affect the ostensibly special nature of the UNC-CH undergraduate experience, few were aware of relevant research on the topic. Rather, respondents noted that information has been used selectively to support preconceived biases. One observed that, "Instead of information driving the decision...the bias going into the discussion has formed the conclusion and the figures have been used to support that." Relatedly, some language used in reports and interviews suggests that decisions have been based less on research and more on emotions and on mythical, or at least untested, assumptions. Although some earlier reports and data bases with quantitative information were available and could have been brought to bear on both sides of the question, they do not appear to have been used significantly by those in a position to influence the decision. In addition, virtually no new analysis was initiated once the question of limits was broached in the state's policy arena. One respondent told us bluntly that "Too little research was done, and too little presented." When asked why that might be, one UNC-CH faculty member suggested that whatever guidance might be provided by such analysis was irrelevant to the state legislature, which harbored a deep "suspicion of outsiders."[15]

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[15] That same faculty member concluded simply that "The university is more cosmopolitan than the state legislature."

A campus administrator captured the political logic as follows: "Should there be North Carolina students denied access in favor of out-of-state students? Add to it legislators' children who are turned down. It is one thing to be turned down so we can get more diversity or a star athlete, but for out-of-state it would be worse." Interestingly, although such a zero-sum perspective was often adopted by the legislature and other decision makers, there is evidence that campus spaces were not so clearly limited. A mid-1980s analysis (The North Carolina Memorandum, 1986b) suggested that there was at that time substantial excess capacity for students in the UNC system. It could be argued, therefore, that at least at that time, the out-of-state student issue was being debated under a debatable assumption that there were limited spaces to be parceled out between in-state and OOS students.[16]

In this context of limited use of quantitative analysis, it is therefore not surprising to find no evidence that the 18-percent figure chosen for the limit was itself based in any way upon research. Several interviewees referred to percentage as a "magic number" with which politicians were comfortable, and which others felt uncomfortable questioning.[17] Comparisons with "flagship" admissions patterns other states were presented occasionally in newspaper accounts of the time (e.g., Cloninger, 1988), but such data and reasoning do not appear to have been used significantly by decision makers. One UNC-CH administrator and faculty member said he was very uncertain why 18 percent, and not 10, 20, or 30 percent, was determined to be acceptable. We could find no firm answer to that question, although UNC System president C. D. Spangler said in 1988 (Cloninger, 1988, p. 1) that the 18 percent figure "was set after studying the situation and realizing that it was likely the General Assembly would set a quota that would be substantially lower that the Board of Governors wished." It appears, therefore, that the genesis of the number was political.[18]

Given this environment, decision-making on the OOS limits appears to have gone forward with little regard for broader or longer-term implications. For example, neither documents nor respondents raised issues related to Astin's recent findings suggesting that the peer group (and thus, the composition of the student body) is the most important influence on growth and development during the undergraduate years (Astin, 1993, p. 398). Most respondents, whether students or faculty or policy makers, seemed to value the "public ivy" nature of the university's reputation, but they gave little evidence of having considered investigating in any systematic way

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16 The quality of educational experiences at UNC-CH might suffer by larger class sizes and increased use of existing facilities, however.

17 See Feldman and March (1981) for an intriguing discussion of the special power of certain numbers in organizations.

18 Interestingly, recent debates on the subject in Virginia have involved differing interpretations of the data from North Carolina on its OOS limits.

the educational effects of moves to protect access for North Carolina citizens. What is more, they revealed little awareness of, or expectations about, future directions the limits might take.

When asked to consider the basis on which he makes decisions concerning the system, one senior system leader told us that he hopes that his decisions are based in neither emotion nor information, but rather in educational purpose. Although generally supportive of limits, he noted that it would be possible to limit out-of-state students to an extent that the nature of the university would change for the worse. He recalled the 1960s, when racial diversity did not exist on campus: "Students missed an awful lot. We need to make sure that all of our students get the best education. From a public institution perspective, we want North Carolina students to get the diversity [one gets] from having students from other areas and other parts of the world....[The mix] is a very positive influence....To get really good faculty, you need really good students." Thus went an argument for an approach based in educational philosophy rather than information or emotion.

To the extent educational philosophy guided the policy process, it could be argued that it was a philosophy undifferentiated by institutional mission. A legislative actor told us "When the general assembly looks at this, they are not focused on Chapel Hill; they are looking at arguments that apply to a number of schools." Such an observation suggests that at the highest levels, an institution's mission, its educational goals, and its future quality were not factors in decisions concerning enrollment limits. A UNC-CH campus respondent noted the alarming nature of this perspective. He remarked that the university could become too provincial, and named the University of Virginia as a flagship school with a more liberal limit, and one likely to remain more competitive nationally. Another commented that the limits are far too restrictive for UNC-CH's mission: the student body would have to be much more diverse geographically for improved diversity to contribute significantly to the undergraduate experience. With respect to teaching and learning, UNC-CH faculty seemed to agree that strong students and a strong faculty are essential to a rich experience in a research-university with national and international aspirations. More than one campus respondent used the term "provincial" when either describing the UNC-CH today or projecting a future that could result from narrowly-drawn populations of students or faculty.

Our sixth finding was that *tuition levels have been a fundamental aspect of the rationale of supporters of enrollment limits.* As the excess of out-of-state tuition over in-state tuition in North Carolina has widened steadily since 1980, the acceptance of more out-of-state students would seem to follow logically for the UNC-CH campus. Four factors have contradicted that connection, however: (1) the ongoing equity considerations across different campuses in the system (see Effron, 1986), (2) the requirements for low tuition formally built into the state constitution, (3) the fact that, despite the recent rises, out-of-state tuition rates have remained low relative to actual educational costs per student, and (4) the fact that the state sends little of

institutions' tuition revenues back to the campuses (they go into the system's general fund account instead). For policy makers, therefore, the perceived net return on admitting OOS students has become less, rather than more, defensible. Legislators as well as system leaders frequently noted that they saw the low tuition paid by in-state students as a tax supplement for those who are qualified; therefore, when out-of-state students take the slot, in-staters are denied (the zero-sum argument discussed earlier). This reasoning was seen as all the more compelling in light of the fact that out-of-state tuition was still below costs, and therefore non-taxpaying out-of-state students were receiving a state subsidy for attendance. Unless and until tuition could be raised to cover the costs of educating them, out-of-state students would remain a poor investment for the state. With this rationale in mind, one legislative actor told us that the enrollment limit issue was "purely economic".

Campus leaders and our respondents generally found these views unpersuasive, however. Several noted that there is educational value in policies providing financial incentives for attendance by non-North Carolinians. The student newspaper (Daily Tar Heel, 1992) editorialized that "If UNC wants to keep its place as a top university, it has to be able to attract top students and be affordable enough to get them here.... Conspiring to drive the 'outsiders' out with a tuition explosion can only harm the University and its standing" (emphasis in the original). The favorable long-term net returns to the state from OOS students remaining in North Carolina were also raised by some. Relatedly, some suggested that, in a funding environment where the university is told to hold the line on expenses and then not allowed to use dollars generated from tuition increases to support the educational program, the dollars from raising tuition to cover out-of-state costs would remain in system coffers. Finally, two of our respondents cautioned that the state should avoid having its university budgets become too dependent on tuition (one noted that to be the case in Michigan and California).

The seventh and final finding of the study was that *once the figure of 18 percent was delivered from policy makers, campus leaders on the Chapel Hill campus worked hard to assure that the actual details of implementation would favor their interests.* The determination of the figure of 18 percent was not the end of the story of enrollment limits, of course. The initial statements of policy was phrased rather generally to refer to "undergraduate students" at each campus. Policy details remained to be worked out, and there remained significant "space" for interpretation on the part of campus leaders. At UNC-CH, administrators met with system leaders to specify the policy in more detail, with the goal of having it implemented in ways consonant with their aspirations for a national and international student body. In the end, they succeeded. One respondent from UNC-CH administration told us:

> Being a planning type, I started asking 18 percent of what? It became clear that no one knew. It was a magic number. It was vague. People were very fearful about asking any questions about it. I proposed that we

> use 18 percent of freshmen. That would move transfers [out of the policy]. There's a big difference, because you get attrition and replacements.

By pursuing such interpretational tacks, and defending them successfully in discussions with UNC system leadership, the actual impact of the 18-percent policy in reducing the enrollment of non-North Carolinians in UNC-CH was lessened. Transfers faced no restrictions as to state residence, and disproportionate attrition among North Carolinians was made more tolerable under the specific implementation chosen. By working at the margins, and in some respects out of the spotlights of media and political publicity surrounding the limits, leadership on the Chapel Hill campus were able to tilt the policy in their favored directions.[19]

Summary: The Findings in the Context of the Research Questions and Related Tensions

At the beginning of this analysis, we outlined three fundamental research questions. Keeping in mind the both the complexity and overlapping nature of the information we have gathered, we related each question to a tension that seems to be at play. Our seven most critical findings may be arrayed under the questions. The first question concerns who has been making the central decisions concerning the out-of-state enrollment. We found that:

- The enrollment limit was imposed from the legislature and system officials, with little formal or informal discussion among UNC-CH constituencies or between those constituencies and higher-level policy makers.

The questions of how those decisions were made seems related to Wildavsky's (1979) stylistic tensions and accompanying patterns of information use. We found that:

- Attempts to allow distinctive OOS admission policies for UNC-CH were effectively thwarted by political concerns.

- No campus constituency has been uniform in their views, and none has mobilized significantly to support one or another view on the issue.

- The various stakeholders have exhibited dramatic differences in their language use and framing of the enrollment-limit issue.

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[19] The imposition by largely non-educational leaders of the 18 percent OOS limit in North Carolina, and the subsequent, actively tendentious interpretation of that limit by academic leaders, have analogies in other states' policy arenas. Little's (1995) study of Georgia's massive lottery-funded HOPE scholarship program for able students found that political leaders in Georgia devised this major 1990s educational policy move without input from academic leaders, then dealt with the policy details as well as the strong reactions of affected colleges and universities later. After the initiative, in both cases, it was left to academic leaders to manage the new policies and programs and shape them at the margins. The appropriate metaphor might be "Ready, fire, aim."

- Research-based information has not played a major role in decision-making about this question.

- Tuition levels have been a fundamental aspect of the rationale of supporters of enrollment limits.

Finally, the question of how the limits have been implemented and institutionalized over time seems related to the underlying values that were favored. We found that:

- Once the figure of 18 percent was delivered from policy makers, leaders on the Chapel Hill campus worked hard to assure that the actual details of implementation would favor their interests.

In light of the related tensions, what interests were served? Concerning the literal limit, in the shorter term taxpayers seem to have won as more immediate concerns about accountability to North Carolina citizens took precedence over the educational values many campus leaders held central. As those leaders implemented the limit in ways that favored their interests, however, educational values were served somewhat. Concerning decision-making style, the social-interaction style seems to have prevailed, as political bargaining and compromise overwhelmed use of fact-based information or analysis. Concerning structure, the legislature and the system seem to have won again as allegiance to hierarchy took precedence over functional diversity and decisions were made with little discussion among the groups. Thus for the most part, the preferences of the legislature and the system, not the campus-based groups of administrators, faculty, and students, seem to have been served.

Implications

For this investigation of how out-of-state enrollment limits might emerge and become influential in a post-secondary system, we listened as different groups of North Carolina actors recounted how they created and responded to pressures and how they viewed past, present, and future events in policy history. Considering the implications of our findings, we are reminded of the increasing demands on state institutions for timely public accountability. In this case, the UNC system's patterns of accountability may differ from those of the Chapel Hill campus, and the nature of short- and long-term accountability may differ as well. That is, actions making an effective response to demands for system accountability in the short term may be quite distinct from actions making an effective response to broad campus-level missions over the longer term (an issue discussed perceptively in recent work by Banta et al. in Tennessee [1996]). The appropriate use of the state's educational assets for now and for the future has been called into question. When system resources were more plentiful, conflicts between longer-term

institutional missions and shorter-term demands on the system as a whole were less evident. As resources have become tightened, tensions have arisen between the immediate needs of individual taxpayers and their representatives for service and efficiency from the state postsecondary system and the need for institutions to be allowed to pursue distinctive, although sometimes broad and multifaceted, long-term missions.

These conclusions raise some more detailed questions about the decision-making structure. For example, what groups of actors should be able to influence decision making regarding individual campuses, and how can each of those groups themselves best be held accountable? Are the sometimes closed, interest-driven processes of state politics so different from the relatively open, "rationally" driven processes of the academy that the two cannot join productively? That is, is there a clear analogy between Wildavsky's (1979) distinction in the Congressional arena between the "social interaction" and "intellectual cognition" styles of decision making, and are the solutions in the academic world as difficult, or even more difficult ? Relatedly, when the scope of concern of top governance at the state level is or narrowly or short-term focused than the institutions under its control, can those institutions thrive? If so, how can the relationship become more responsive to institutional or longer-term needs? By what mechanisms can new decision structures and frameworks evolve?

As Cole (1993) observed, higher-education governance has become a balancing act, a process of resolving dilemmas of choice. The problem may be particularly acute in state-supported institutions. Berdahl and Gove (1982) have suggested that legislators and governors ultimately set policy at state universities, and Weathersby (1984) has argued similarly that state universities are "governmental creatures." Public universities are thus delicately balanced multipurpose institutions located deep in the maw and welter of state politics. They, therefore, frequently experience challenges threatening their equilibria and productivity as social systems. Such challenges can raise a number of short and long-term problems.

Those problems can be brought to the surface of public discourse or remain below that surface. When they remain submerged, decision processes may not be fully informed, and outcomes may not be favorable to the universities themselves or to the states they serve. A case in point is the North Carolina out-of-state student issue. What might seem to be a rather straightforward state policy matter is in fact loaded with long-term gravity.[20] Have questions of the breadth and stability of UNC-CH's mission been decided implicitly without full debate and understanding of the implications involved, because those implications have not been heard in the public discourse? To balance wisely, decision makers need to be informed by both factual knowledge and the free interchange of ideas. In North Carolina, neither information nor free

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[20] In a sense, the OOS issue is a "garbage-can" issue (Cohen and March, 1986), in which a variety of quite fundamental questions concerning universities are involved.

debate has substantially influenced decisions on the OOS question. Restricting geographic diversity in UNC-CH's undergraduate population could harm the undergraduate experience there, the university's faculty recruitment efforts, and perhaps ultimately, its national and international credibility and reputation. The question arises as to how local or regional can the campus's undergraduate population become before the quality and stature of the institution is affected.

Healthy social institutions require structures of discourse encouraging free debate. Within such structures, informed actors are encouraged to air the natural tensions that exist among them. The choices facing states, postsecondary systems, and universities today require that they use these structures as resources to their fullest advantage. Lack of exchange across and within constituencies can be seen as a missed opportunity to exploit potential resources. Some North Carolina leaders seem to have failed to recognize this opportunity: they have neglected to use the natural tensions involved in the OOS issue to engage parties in the creative thinking and debate that could lead to a clarified, consensual UNC-CH mission. By choosing to address short-term accountability pressures, the leadership may be sacrificing creative, productive solutions for the longer term. In the process, they may also be sacrificing opportunities to build structures that can serve well for other issues.

In the end, the question comes back to the multiple purposes served by public research universities such as UNC at Chapel Hill. At times, these several purposes, and the several constituencies associated with those purposes, come into conflict with each other. That conflict often centers on local versus broader aspirations for such institutions. For example, tensions can arise between a university's goal of developing as a globally recognized center for research and teaching and its goal of educating and otherwise serving the citizens of its own state. Such conflict can affect public research universities' dealings with state university systems' central offices, with other state postsecondary governing bodies, with state legislatures, and with alumni. In addition, the conflict may affect internal interactions among an institution's own faculty, staff, and students, and may contribute over time to institutional change and redefinition. There is both a scholarly and a practical need to investigate how these kinds of tensions over institutional purposes are resolved.

In particular, given the widespread and natural desire that decisions over such conflicts be made rationally, with attention to both short and longer term implications, there is need to examine the role played by research-based information in resolving such tensions among purposes. It is striking that, in the present study, we found no evidence of what Hearn and Corcoran (1988) termed "dialogues of conflicting data claims." Those authors and others (see Terenzini, 1995; Rhoades, 1995) have noted that institutional and policy research on campuses and in central system offices are proliferating, but the understanding and use of the information acquired are often imperfect and contested. Often, different groups vie for the accepted claims to

fact in a dispute. In North Carolina's OOS issue, however, information played virtually no role. Instead, a seemingly important policy issue was resolved almost entirely without resort to analysis, in an echo of Trombley's (1993) notion of "public policy by anecdote." And what analysis did take place seemed superficial, rather than oriented to both the short and long term, and both the specific and broad aspects of the issue.[21]

It would be a mistake, however, to simply characterize what happened in North Carolina as "irrational" and dismiss it disparagingly at that. For one thing, recall that Wildavsky (1979) deemed the social nature of political rationality no less important than cognitively driven styles of decision making that academics more often call "rational." What has happened in North Carolina fits within political notions of rationality, and this kind of reasoning was in fact supplied to us rather convincingly by several of our non-academic respondents. Slaughter (1995) has cautioned observers to beware of idealizing the notion of analysis at the expense of the implications of that analysis. She observes that pursuing the usual "rational" criteria for decision making in academic policy (e.g., comparing programs' centrality, quality, costs) can sometimes have deleterious impacts on diversity and equity on campuses. Slaughter focuses in particular on retrenchment efforts, but her points apply to broad policies like statewide admissions criteria as well.[22] To the extent analysis might point decision makers toward a more selective and more geographically diverse University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and to the extent such a place is also more provincial or less welcoming for North Carolina students from disadvantaged backgrounds, legitimate questions may be raised about the quality of the place, the appropriateness of its culture, and its use of taxpayer resources.[23]

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[21] For example, although the North Carolina press occasionally reported quantitative data on OOS admissions issues, it was largely summary or inelegantly comparative data, and there was little attention to nuance. This pattern echoes findings from Chance's (1993) study of the coverage of postsecondary issues in four major California newspapers. He found that the press in that state have tended to have an implicit deference to higher education, and for that reason tend to avoid consideration of profound issues in higher education. Instead, they disproportionately tackle specific, more glamorous issues such as budget scandals, presidential missteps, student-loan defaults, faculty productivity, protests over tuition, student and faculty cheating, and the like.

[22] In a similar vein, Rhoades (1995) suggests that academic decision making often suffers from a rationalistic conception of information that focuses on the need for more information and less politics. On the last point, Rhoades (p. 29) suggests "As an alternative to the ritualistic and rapid rush to gather information, more time should be devoted to deliberation and to the review of decisions." Perhaps the caution one should use in pursuing the "more information is good" argument is best reflected in lines from T. S. Eliot's 1934 play "The Rock" (p. 7): "Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?" Cleveland (1985) notes that information is the prelude to knowledge, and that knowledge is the prelude to wisdom -- the three are not the same. He stresses that a glut of information does not portend knowledge, nor does it portend wise decisions.

[23] It is instructive to note, as one example of the difficulties of framing this issue squarely on equity grounds, that charges of racism were raised implicitly and explicitly by people on both sides of the issue. Those opposing the 18-percent limit noted that historically black public institutions were among the institutions importing the highest proportions of OOS students. Those supporting the limit raised images of white, affluent prep-school graduates from out of state taking the place of talented in-state African-American students at UNC-CH.

Thus, what is right and wrong in North Carolina's final decisions on this issue is not clearcut. What does seem clearcut to us, however, is the fact that there appear to have been problems in the ways the decisions surrounding out-of-state students have been made. The value of political rationality increases when it is well blended with cognitively driven, analytic rationality. The latter has apparently been lacking to a significant extent in the North Carolina discussion around out-of-state students. Such a finding may surprise or disturb some. Ideally, however, the findings here will contribute to further research and national discussion of the difficult choices facing research universities, the ways those choices are being made, and the implications of those choices for higher education.

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Appendix:
The Interview Protocol

Introduction to be Read to Respondents: We are studying the ways UNC-Chapel Hill has dealt with the public debate over the past few years concerning the admission of out-of-state students on this campus. We are very interested in learning your perceptions of the history of this debate, the central actors in the debate, the arguments emerging in the debate, and its effects on the campus, the system, and the state. With that in mind, we have a series of questions we would like to pose for you. We encourage you, however, to express any thoughts you might have on the topic, going beyond the particular question at hand. In other words, we have no interest in limiting what you might be able to tell us on this issue. All told, the interview need not take more than thirty minutes of your time. We can certainly stay longer, though, if you have more that you wish to tell us. After the interview, we will send a summary of our meeting to you to make sure we have captured your comments accurately.

Question 1: How would you characterize the general history of the debate since 1980 on the admission and enrollment of out-of-state undergraduate students at UNC-Chapel Hill?

Question 2: Who have been the central actors in the debate?

Question 3: Can you identify any strikingly singular events in the course of the debate? For example, do you recall any watershed moments in which the debate took a dramatic turn, or became more visible, or became more heated?

Question 4: Could you tell us the two or three arguments most frequently made for imposing stricter limitations on the admission and enrollment of out-of-state students?

Question 5: Could you tell us the two or three arguments most frequently made against imposing stricter limitations?

Question 6: One might assume that people outside the university largely favor limiting the proportion of out-of-state students admitted, while those inside largely favor maintaining a healthy proportion of such students in the undergraduate student body. How accurate is this assumption?

Question 7: What role has information, particularly research-based information from institutional researchers and policy analysts, played thus far in the debate?

Question 8: What has been the influence of the debate thus far on:

a) undergraduates and the undergraduate experience at the university?
b) alumni and relations with alumni?
c) faculty and faculty recruitment?
d) relations between the campus and leadership of the UNC system?
e) relations with the state legislature?
f) relations with the general public, including prospective students and their parents, in North Carolina?
g) relations with the general public, including prospective students and their parents, outside North Carolina?
h) relations with prospective donors to the university?
i) relations with academic colleagues and associations around the nation?

Question 9: From your own perspective, what is the relationship between the admission and enrollment of out-of-state students at UNC-Chapel Hill and:

a) the quality of the undergraduate experience at the university?
b) other aspects of the quality of the university?
c) the reputation of the university in the state?
d) the reputation of the university nationally and internationally?

Question 10: As you have followed this debate, what have been the most important sources of information for you?

Question 11: Please suggest to us any documents, or sources of documents, which you feel would help us in examining this debate.

Question 12: Please give us the name of anyone else who you believe would be helpful to us in examining the debate.

Question 13: How sensitive are you to the prospect of your name, or that of the institution or system, being identified in any publications stemming from our study?

Question 14: Is there anything else you would like to add regarding this issue or our study?

Thank you very much.